

**REMARKS**

Claims 1 and 3-14 have been examined. Claim 3 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first and second paragraph, claims 1 and 8-10 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and claims 1, 3-6 and 8-13 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Also, the Examiner has indicated that claims 7 and 14 contain allowable subject matter.

**I. Preliminary Matter**

The Examiner has objected to claims 1 and 3-10 due to an informality regarding the phrase “time period.” Accordingly, Applicant has amended the claims in the manner suggested by the Examiner.

**II. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph**

The Examiner has rejected claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as allegedly failing to comply with the enablement requirement. By this Amendment, Applicant has canceled claim 3, without prejudice or disclaimer. Accordingly, the rejection of claim 3 is now moot.

**III. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph**

The Examiner has rejected claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite. By this Amendment, Applicant has canceled claim 3, without prejudice or disclaimer. Accordingly, the rejection of claim 3 is now moot.

**IV. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,846,475 to Yano (“Yano”) (assigned to Bridgestone Corporation)**

The Examiner has rejected claims 1 and 8-10 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Yano.

**A. Claim 1**

Applicant submits that claim 1 is patentable over the cited reference. For example, claim 1 recites, “a protruding part is provided as the vibration imparting part and protrudes from a rubber member loading surface side of the endless belt, and the rubber member is moved relatively to the protruding part due to rotation of the endless belt, and wherein: a plurality of revolving elements that are held freely rotatably are provided as the protruding part, and when the endless belt rotates, the revolving elements that are butted against the rubber member are turned by a moving force of the endless belt and a friction force exerted by the rubber member.”

The above features were previously recited in claims 4 and 5. Since Yano fails to disclose such features, Applicant submits that claim 1 is patentable over the cited reference.

As set forth above, claim 1 recites that the protruding part is provided as the vibration imparting part, and the protruding part is able to be rotated. As set forth in paragraphs [0014] and [0037] of the present Application, if the conveying distance is short, the period of vibration of the rubber member can be sufficiently long to allow the device to be configured in a compact manner. Furthermore, the plurality of revolving elements cause the conveyed rubber member to be undulated so that the entire rubber member is subjected to vibrations. This relieves internal strain of the rubber member.

**B. Claims 8-10**

Applicant submits that claims 8-10 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

**V. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of Yano**

The Examiner has rejected claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Yano. By this Amendment, Applicant has canceled claim 3, without prejudice or disclaimer. Accordingly, the rejection of claim 3 is now moot.

**VI. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of Yano, U.S. Patent No. 4,821,869 to Hodlewsky (“Hodlewsky”) and U.S. Patent No. 1,769,546 to Ritchey (“Ritchey”)**

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 4-6 and 8-13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Yano in view of Hodlewsky and Ritchey.

**A. Claim 1**

Applicant submits that claim 1 is patentable over the cited reference. For example, claim 1 recites, “a protruding part is provided as the vibration imparting part and protrudes from a rubber member loading surface side of the endless belt, and the rubber member is moved relatively to the protruding part due to rotation of the endless belt, and wherein: a plurality of revolving elements that are held freely rotatably are provided as the protruding part, and when the endless belt rotates, the revolving elements that are butted against the rubber member are turned by a moving force of the endless belt and a friction force exerted by the rubber member.”

As set forth above, claim 1 recites that the protruding part is provided as the vibration imparting part, and the protruding part is able to be rotated. As set forth in paragraphs [0014] and [0037] of the present Application, if the conveying distance is short, the period of vibration of the rubber member can be sufficiently long to allow the device to be configured in a compact manner. Furthermore, the plurality of revolving elements cause the conveyed rubber member to be undulated so that the entire rubber member is subjected to vibrations. This relieves internal strain of the rubber member.

The above cited features of claim 1 were previously recited in claims 4 and 5. On page 5 of the Office Action, the Examiner appears to maintain that Hodlewsky discloses the features of claims 4 and 5. Applicant submits, however, that in Hodlewsky, a protruding part is not provided as a vibration imparting part. Furthermore, Yano discloses that its apparatus is for reducing a shrinkage amount of a rubber member. On the other hand, Hodlewsky fails to disclose or even contemplate the issue of shrinkage of a rubber member and the conveying speed. Accordingly, Applicant submits that there is no rational reason why one skilled in the art would utilize a conveyor such as that taught in Hodlewsky in the apparatus of Yano.

At least based on the foregoing, and since Ritchey fails to cure the deficient teachings of Yano and Hodlewsky, Applicant submits that claim 1 is patentable over the cited references.

**B. Claims 4-6 and 8-10**

Since the features of claims 4 and 5 have been incorporated into claim 1, Applicant has canceled claims 4 and 5 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Applicant submits that claims 6 and 8-10 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency.

**C. Claim 11**

Since claim 11 recites features that are analogous to the features discussed above for claim 1, Applicant submits that claim 11 is patentable for at least analogous reasons as claim 1.

**D. Claims 12 and 13**

Since the features of claim 12 have been incorporated into claim 11, Applicant has canceled claim 12 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Applicant submits that claim 13 is patentable at least by virtue of its dependency.

**VII. Allowable Subject Matter**

As set forth above, the Examiner has indicated that claims 7 and 14 contain allowable subject matter.

**VIII. Conclusion**

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any

overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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**23373**

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